X-MEN®

MARK OF CAIN

MARVEL

#3
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DENNIS CALERO

TM

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An angel falls

An experiment begins

A dead brother speaks

by FRED VAN LENTE & DENNIS CALERO, with

VC's CLAYTON COWLES - LETTERS

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Don't think I don't sympathize with your plight, Mr. Halloway.

I've had brother problems of my own.

But my father died when I was a boy, and my mother married a man... Kurt Marko.

Classic sociopath. Charming. Vicious. Manipulative for its own sake.

He named his own son *Cain*, for God's sake. Can you imagine what kind of man does that?

Cain...? Is your...?

He made quite a show of preferring me to his biological offspring.

(while secretly berating me where no one else could hear)

And Cain... Well, you *know* him.

Believe it or not, in my youth I could almost hold my own against him.

Once, when we were teenagers... We were at the top of the grand staircase... Struggling...

...and...

...well...

...you see the results.

When we were much younger, Cain and I managed to understand what our father was doing to us.

We ran away from home. Fled to a lighthouse not far from our Westchester manse, on the Hudson...

...terribly bucolic, I know, but the keeper's widow took pity on us. And kept us safe for a weekend...

...until she felt compelled to notify our mother to bring us home.

My memories of that time are among my fondest.

I want to be your beacon, Thomas. Your sanctuary.

But first you need to open up to me.

Tell me about your late brother. How did Robert get to be... the way he was?

And how did you get out of your cell?

Impenetrable by sentiment *and* reason.

A pity.

As long as you deny me answers, Mr. Halloway...

...I deny you sleep, here in Project: Wideawake.

And my years as a teacher of youth...

...have left me infinitely patient.

KLAANNNNG

Lighthouse...

Tommy!

Oh my God...

I'm sorry I couldn't come sooner...it wasn't safe!

But Professor X has sent his horrid "*X Men*" off to the mainland on some errand--

--so I'm here at last darling!

"To see you trussed up like some kind of animal...

"...it was all I could do...

"...to not tell Xavier *I* was the one who let you out of your cell in the first place!

"That you and I have been working together all along!

"Just so I wouldn't have to watch you suffer any--"

Tell you what.

You stop your blubbering.

Then my suffering will end.

Wha--

KRAAKK'K

Just watched from your tower while that big Russian squeezed the life out of me?

Well keep your eyes open-- Keep them *open*, damn you!

WHUDDD

How you like it, huh? *Eyes open!* Watch *this!*

Tommy-- You'll kill--

Didn't I tell you to kill the waterworks?

Judd? Come in, this is Halloway.

Finally!

We were just about ready to give up and sail back to Madripoor and take our chances, *eh?*

If you had done that, I would have found you. And you would have regretted it.

Pfff. Then he woke up.

I'm making my way to the rendezvous point in the ***"No Man's Land"*** between the prison and the army base now.

Meet me there.

What about the gem? You figure out where it is?

One thing at a time, Little Man.

You pick me up.

T-Tommy--We need to get you on the boat as soon as possible. You need to get some sleep.

You've gone over a week without it and you're acting--well--

--I'm worried about you, Tommy--

Then we talk gem.

KLKKK

God damn it, you call me that one more time and I'll knock your teeth out.

And stop trying to put me to bed, like an infant.

I've got one eye on you at all times.

You call me by my real name from now on.

I'm Robert.

Wait.

I wanna check out one thing first.

That hangar...

What do the army boys have that could be that big?

What does that have to do with us, To--

--Robert?

Nothing to worry your pretty little head about.

Whoa, whoa, whoa!

Who's the skirt?

Ballast, for all you care.

She's coming aboard.

Hey! My boat, my rules, Halloway!

I'll leave you both here if--

Her name's Wanda Magnus.

Yes, that Wanda Magnus.

She's owed me since I saved her from Remy Le Beau's muscle back in Harlem.

And she knows who's *really* responsible for her father's death--

Sounds to *me* like she's another *share* we gotta split our *take* with you never bothered *telling* us about!

We're supposed to be *partners!*

That means you pull your *"Man of Mystery"* routine with the *rubes,* not with *me!*

You got any more surprises, you better unwrap 'em now, or I'm heading back to *Havana* to reacquaint myself with *rum-running!*

Darling?

Well...we don't know where the gem is, precisely...

"...but we know where to start *looking*."

Cain told me in his telegram somebody like you would be stopping by. One of his gutless cronies.

He said you'd have a little something for me, too!

Like when I hid him and his Little Lord Fauntleroy step-brother here from their demon father--Cain had to swipe quite a bit from his mother's purse to cover my risk!

Cain didn't say *boo* about any payment to you, Mrs. MacTaggart.

And you should know well enough by now that he's not a man to be trifled with--

Don't gimme that!

Cain knows I ain't never lifted a finger for the likes of him without grease and I ain't about to stop--

Club
Club
Thelma's Shop
"--now that the purses have gotten ***bigger.***"
A peerless example of Scottish womanhood, Mrs. MacTaggart is.
Once she squeezed the C-note out of me--
--which you mugs ***are*** throwing in with me for, don't think I'll let you forget--
--our fair Highlands lass at last confessed Marko telegrammed her from Madripoor.
Said he was shipping her something on a tub flying Singapore colors he wanted her to sit on. He must have been expecting a double-cross, too.
The Blackbird, taking her sweet time chugging to New York harbor by way of the Cape of Good Hope.
We just gotta keep checking the papers 'til they announce... if you'll forgive the cliché...
...our ship has come in.
Where's Tommy? This was his tip. Thought he'd want to hear this.
You mean that whackjob we picked up on Genosha?
Don't know who that egg is--
--but it ***ain't Tommy.***
You sure?
That's too bad.

"I like him a lot *better* this way."

Yes...There we are...

...not my cleanest performance...

...but then I stand by my original request to use anesthetic.

No. No... *Sssssssss*...

...no dullness.

No weakness.

Each cut of the knife...

...reminds me of a pain I must repay in kind.

The incisions will need to heal some before we can discuss grafts to fully camouflage the area.

I've never seen such a tattoo before...

...except in newsreels.

I know a reporter or two who would pay top dollar to chat with a man with firsthand knowledge of Genosha Bay.

And a doctor or *one* who wouldn't mind... extra consideration to keep that same information out of the hands of the FBI.

You think you're special just because you know how to handle a knife, Dr. Cornelius?

You keep running your mouth...

...and you'll find out how *common* the skill *is*.

Repulsive little worm.

At least you can't be marked as an escapee right away--

--Robert.

Now all we need to do is wait for the *Blackbird* to put into port.

Then, while I make sure the others are distracted...

...we're going to steal the gem for ourselves.

Wha-- What are you saying?

Actually, by *"we"* I mean *"you."*

One of your shady girlfriends you used to run with when you spent every night flushing LeBeau's booze down your gullet and your money down his tables.

I'd do it myself--I'm the only one I really trust to...

"...but I'll have my hands full with One-Eye, the Drunk, and the Midget."

Hey--The Blackbird, right?

Here it is!

SHIPPING NEWS

Today.

It'll be in today.

SHIPPING NEWS

5:17 AM — Freedom's Lady from Cork

6:05 AM — Admiral Akbar from Alexandria

8:07 AM — Blackbird from Madripoor

8:17 AM — Oracle from Halifax (Rob't MacKenzie, Capt.)

Gentlemen!

Time to get what's ours.

Somebody getting the shipping manifest?!

Ggkkk--

Soon as my hands are free.

WOKK

KRNCH

Okay, here we go...

WHAP

...the parcels from Madripoor are in container 65, aisle 22, bin 5, in hold number three--

Got it.

This is three...

...here...

Oh, [redacted] me.

Aaahh!

<I am the Lord's agent on Earth carving out sins from the sinners so when they arrive at Heaven>

<they will be cleansed as the butcher cleanses flesh from the calf>

What is he saying? What is that? Is that *Kraut?*

Hold on, Cyclops! I got your *back*--

You know what you call this?

Irony.

Yyyaahhh!!

Move a muscle, *liebchen,* and I cure your craziness in the most effective but messiest of ways, *eh?*

Cyclops! While we've got them covered--

--get the gem!

I abhor violence.

HEYYY!! Leggo o' me, ya big--

YYYAAAAHHHHHH--

SPLASH

A pity I'm so good at it.

Cap'--

<Blasphemy to touch the holy servant of-->

KRRRRKKKK

<A kick count as "touch?">

Gah!

<It's clear to me, Herr Wagner, that you are yet another fine product of Professor Xavier's expert psychological counseling.>

<It's unfathomable how Cyclops turned out so well.>

Hnnnnf!!

<This is our second meeting.>

<And, I assure you, our last.>

<Unfortunately for you, since we last met-->

<--I have reaped the benefits of Professor X's treatment too!>

Cyclops! The gem?

On it.

Здравствуйте.

It is not often I get to crush a man's ribcage twice in one week...

NUHHCRAKK

Hey.

I wanted to do that.

Aw, no...

Why the long faces, gents?

I did what you asked me to.

I got the gem.

I got you.

Let's go see Xavier.

NEXT ISSUE

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